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ABSTRACT

Using the case of the Brookline Early Education Project (BEEP), begun in Boston in the early 1970s, this book provides a framework for planning, administering, and evaluating a comprehensive birth-to-kindergarten program. Early education programs based in the school can increase parental involvement and improve school performance for children from families across the socioeconomic spectrum. Results from the BEEP program showed that an intensive level of intervention during the first 5 years positively modifies subsequent classroom behavior and academic skills. Chapter 1 discusses why schools are dealing with the idea of providing early childhood programs. Chapter 2 reviews the extensive literature on the success of early childhood programs. Chapter 3 describes the controversy about the role of the public school in early childhood and family support programs, considering arguments raised by critics and advocates of such programs. Chapter 4 presents the origins of BEEP and the research and community base upon which it was built. Chapters 5 through 9 examine in detail the three components of BEEP: parent education and support; early childhood education for toddlers and pre-kindergartners (including evaluation of providing a bilingual program for children from Hispanic families); and health and development monitoring. Chapter 10 summarizes the views of parents who participated in BEEP, emphasizing the program components they found most and least valuable. Chapter 11 evaluates BEEP based on its impact on children's functioning in kindergarten and grade two. Chapter 12 considers BEEP in light of current discussions about school-based early childhood programs and delineates components critical to the success of such programs. Five appendices contain questions parents asked about BEEP, questions BEEP staff used during home visits, tables of assessment measures and data, and Brookline Public Schools' policy statement on early education. Contains approximately 250 references. (TM)

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